

PRAYER MEETING TOPICS

THE PRAYER COVERING

Lesson, I Cor. 11: 1-16.

1. Scripture must be interpreted with reference to the circumstances under which it was written.
2. Scriptural commands are either *specific*, i. e. for a particular time and condition, or *universal*, i. e. for all times and all conditions. These two principles are admitted by all churches. This scripture is *specific* in its application, because it relates to,

I A Greek Custom.

This is shown by

1. The sixteenth verse which says, "We (the Jews) have no such custom, neither the churches of God." It was simply a local custom which Greek Christians were to be careful not to violate.
2. By the fact that to a Greek church only did Paul write this injunction.

II The Purpose of the Custom

- a. To distinguish between immoral and chaste women. v. 6.
1. Only harlots among the Greeks at that time shaved or sheared their heads, and went without the head covering in public assemblies.
- b. To avoid the shame of a loose character. v. 6. I Thess. 5: 22.
- c. To show the authority of man over woman. v. 3. Gen. 3: 16.

1. In that day woman was in an inferior position, and public opinion thought her much inferior to man.

2. Paul says she should be subject to man, (vs. 8 and 9.) but also that neither is without the other and both are of God and thus began the teaching which has since liberated woman. vs. 11 and 12.

d. To honor the man. v. 3 and 5.

1. For Grecian women to cover the head and face was to signify her subjection to her head, i. e., man. But for a man to cover his head was to dishonor his head, i. e., God.

2. Among the Jews the opposite custom prevailed, men kept their heads covered in the synagogue, while women, tho covered in the presence of men, threw off their covering in the synagogue, where they were separated from the men by a screen.

e. To not offend the angels which were present in the churches. v. 10, Heb. 1: 14.

1. The angels would be offended if they saw these Grecian women violating a custom which meant so much to all Greeks, and thus causing outsiders to think that Christianity made women throw away the sign of modesty and subjection to man. Rom. 14: 16.

III Paul's Purpose in Enjoining This.

a. To preserve the Christians at Corinth from being misunderstood by other Christians. Rom. 14: 15.

b. To have the Greek Christians be observant of Grecian customs, so no scandal would be created. I Cor. 9: 19-25.

1. Christianity had, and has, enough obstacles to overcome in the sinful propensities of man without adding others which could be avoided without sacrificing the principles of the gospel.

c. To induce orderliness and repress all sensationalism among the Christians.

1. These Greeks had been heathens, and when the women heard that "in Christ there is neither male or female," they took the liberty to throw off their covering, the sign of man's authority over them, and of their modesty.

IV Its Limitations.

1. To the place (Corinth) and people (Greeks) to whom it was written, and those in similar circumstances. I Cor. 1: 2

2. It has no force on us today, because we are not Greeks, we do not live at Corinth and are not in the midst of similar customs and circumstances.

3. The need of such a command ceased when such local customs as women having the face and head covered in public ceased.

4. Examples: Other examples in Scripture of

commands limited to certain times and specific needs are,

- a. About marrying. I Cor. 7: 32-34.
- b. About letting virgin daughters marry. I Cor. 7: 36-40.
- c. About eating meat offered to idols. I Cor. 8. J. L. GILLIN.

Listening to God

F. B. Meyer.

A friend of mine told me that he called one day upon a brother clergyman, who had been ill in bed for six months. He said to this man, "I suppose that God Almighty had a good many things to say to you, but you were too busy to listen, and so he had to put you on your back, that you might be able to give him time."

When he was going out the thought struck him, "I, too, am a busy man, and God Almighty may have to put me on my back, that he may tell me all he wishes."

So he resolved that each night he would sit quietly in his study, not reading, not writing, but opening his heart, that God's Spirit might impress upon him what he designed to teach, and criticise the life of the previous day.

As Others See Us

Sunday-School Times.

What a man gives out, not what he keeps, determines his appearance in the eyes of the world. Beauty, brightness, color consist not in what a thing keeps, but in what it gives out. A well-known law of optics teaches us that a thing is seen, not in the color which it takes in and keeps, but in that color which it gives back again. The thing that we call red is the one which is, in one sense, blue; that is, it takes in the blue rays and keeps them for itself, but gives back the red ones in color. Gold has kept all the green rays, and gives back the yellow ones, so we think it is yellow. The object which we call black takes in every ray of light, and keeps them for itself, and we have strikingly enough seen in it the symbol of all evil. The object which we call white keeps nothing of the sun's rays, but gives them all out again, and we have seen in it the symbol of all good. So a man is seen and known, not by what he receives and keeps for himself, but for what he gives forth to others. The rich man who keeps everything for himself is seen and known to be a poor, mean man. The wise man who holds haughtily his learning to himself will, in the judgment of men, be very apt to seem a proud fool.

"Measure thy life by loss instead of gain, Not by the wine drunk, but by the wine poured forth; For life's strength standeth in life's sacrifice, And whoso gives the most has most to give."

A Perfect Heart

Catherine Booth.

A heart perfect toward God! What does it mean? It means perfect in its obedience. That man or woman who has this kind of a heart ceases to pick and choose among the commandments of God which he shall obey and which he shall not; he ceases to have his own will, and the way that God may call

him to take may look to him as if it were a dangerous or risky way, and he may wait a little bit, to be thoroughly satisfied; but when once satisfied that it is God's way the true child will not hesitate. He confers not with flesh and blood, but on he goes, irrespective of consequences. This was Paul's kind of obedience. He conferred not with flesh and blood; he counted all things dung and dross, and he went on doing so to the end—thru out in his obedience.

People come to us and want to know what they are to do; they feel that they are only half-hearted in God's service; they have neither joy nor power, and say, "What must I do?" And we take, as God helps us, the dissecting knife, and try to find out the difficulty. We get them down under the blaze of the Holy Spirit's light, and try to prove them and find where they are wrong. Perhaps the Lord leads us to the sore spot, and we point out the difficulty, but instead of obeying they shrink away. They look ahead, and they see that to obey the light will involve loss of some kind—perhaps reputation, wealth, family associations, ease, or loss of friends, loss of temporal comforts, loss of good business. Loss is in the background, and they see it. They know where we are leading them to, and they slip back; they do not want to see, and yet they do not want to consider themselves dishonest, so they turn their heads away, and will not look in the direction of the light, smoothing it all over and singing:

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small," etc.

That is not a perfect heart, but a partial heart toward the Lord God.

The Mission Field

Report of Washington Church Fund for Week Ending April 14

S. S. C. E., Sergeantsville, N. J.,	\$ 3 00
Chas. Dunmire, Elkhart, Ind.,	1 00
Additional from South Bend, Ind.,	1 50
I. B. Loucks and wife, Falls City, Neb.,	3 00
Joseph Ruble, Lillivale, Oklahoma,	5 00
Brother Abshire, Roanoke, Va.,	50
Elmer Shipley, Washington, D. C.,	50
Col. by Elmer Shipley, "	2 00
" Mrs. John Lyon, "	7 50
R. I. Garber and wife, "	50 00

Amount previously reported, \$ 74 00
3575 80

\$ 3649 80

The names of Mrs. Etta Fox and Mazie Teeter were omitted from the report of the Pleasant Hill church, Ohio, each \$1 00. I of course charge this error to the compositor, not the money but the error.

There are still some pledges unpaid. There are two weighty reasons why these should be paid. One is, we have paid \$5.00 on account of mortgage, and the transfer and insurance expenses are over \$100. This leaves us short for the necessary improvements such as baptistry, water-closets, painting, etc. We must make a new sewer connection which is expensive work, but perhaps the more weighty reason is, the money no doubt was pledged in good faith. If so it is an obligation before God that must be accounted for somewhere or somehow. It is easy to over-reach one's self and if any pledges have been made where it is not possible or desirable to pay them they should be recalled.

JACOB C. CASSEL,
Sec. M. B. of B. C.